

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**HIGHWAYS AND NEIGHBOURHOODS
CABINET MEMBER**

SCHOOL FOOD PLAN

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the recent Government School Food Plan and its implications for the Schools Catering Service in North Lincolnshire.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The government recently released their School Food Plan. A summary of the plans findings, proposals and key actions is attached to this report.
- 2.2 The government intends to introduce free school meals for KS1 pupils effective from September 2014. This will impact significantly on the current catering service. It is estimated that this will increase the number of meals the service will need to provide by 33%.
- 2.3 In addition to these changes, the current catering service is developing its commercial offering. It has recently won catering contracts for educational establishments in both North East Lincolnshire and Lincolnshire.
- 2.4 The service can provide the additional demand for school meals within North Lincolnshire Schools using existing capacity. The extra commercial work will inevitably mean that the current kitchen arrangements are inadequate to meet all of the catering service's future needs.
- 2.5 The government has made capital funds available to councils to equip kitchens to meet any additional demand.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 Option 1: That the service adopts the key actions as outlined within the School Food Plan within its existing Service Development Planning process. That the catering service in preparing for the introduction of the free school meals explores the business case for additional kitchen facilities in North Lincolnshire to meet the increased demand due to commercial activity.

- 3.2 Option 2: That the service explores alternative ways to respond to the key actions within the School Food Plan and contains any additional demand within existing facilities. This will inhibit future commercial activity

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 In support of Option 1 since June 2012 the service has undergone considerable change. This change has in the main focused around the development of a strong customer relationship with schools, looking to provide more bespoke services. To ensure this was successful the service refreshed its traditional approach to implementing change through the introduction of a new performance framework based on an annual Development Plan.
- 4.2 The School Food Plan is a welcome document that has in essence picked up on many of the proposals already identified by the service in its Development Planning process. Therefore incorporating into the services Development Plan the key actions of the School Food Plan would not only address any duplication of planned actions but would also provide a robust and tested process to ensure that the key actions from the plan are delivered and implemented effectively.
- 4.3 The catering service currently operates from school kitchens. However a number of the kitchens from September will have to produce significantly more food than in previous years. This will require all kitchens to work at full capacity.
- 4.4 Schools that do not have kitchens are supported by other school kitchen sites. The Civic Centre kitchen is also operating at an over capacity level. They support the meals provided to the Learning Development Centre. They also support a number of new commercial catering ventures linked to pre-school services and local businesses
- 4.5 Preparing a separate action plan would be more bureaucratic. It would cause unnecessary confusion over duplication of actions etc. It is considered impractical to contain the estimated demand for both free school meals and new commercial services within existing kitchen capacity.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

- 5.1 The costs associated with providing the additional free school meals in North Lincolnshire are estimated in the region of £350,000. It is anticipated that the government will provide funds to cover these costs directly to schools. Details of how the schools will individually pay the catering service for the cost of providing these meals are under consideration.

5.2 Any costs resulting from additional catering facilities will be identified within individual business case options.

6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

6.1 There are no integrated impacts as a result of this proposal.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

7.1 Consultation with many of the schools receiving free school meals from September has already started.

7.2 The council's asset management team are aware of the increased demand on the catering service from September. They are exploring options to progress to business case level, if appropriate, to supplement the services kitchen capacity.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the Cabinet Member notes the key actions within the School Food Plan.

8.2 That the Cabinet Member notes the additional demands this will place on the catering service alongside the additional capacity needed to support the success the service has had in developing contracts across North East Lincolnshire and Lincolnshire.

8.3 That the Cabinet Member supports the inclusion of the key actions into the existing Development Plan framework and receives a future report on progress against the actions In September 2014.

8.4 That the Cabinet Member supports the development of business plans to consider any expansion in kitchen capacity.

DIRECTOR OF PLACES

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report

Government School Food Plan

Background Information - The School Food Plan

The School Food Plan is the latest government plan regarding school meals and school food. This report was written by Henry Dimbleby and John Vincent. This work culminated in a document called "The School Food Plan" which is available online as necessary with the link at the end of this report.

Key Actions from the Plan

1. Put cooking into the curriculum: make cooking and food an entitlement in key stages one to three - *Completed*
2. Introduce food-based standards for all schools – *To apply by September 2014*
3. Kick-start increased take-up of good school food – *Funding given from DfE and work begun*
4. Set up financially self-sufficient breakfast clubs – *Funding allocated from DfE in some areas*
5. Set up flagship boroughs to demonstrate the impact of improving school food on a large scale – *London Borough in hand*
6. Investigate the case for extending free school meals entitlement – *Government and DfE working on this.*
7. Train head teachers: include food and nutrition in head teacher training – *included.*
8. Public Health England will promote policies which improve children's diets in schools – *In progress*
9. Ofsted inspectors to consider behaviour and culture in the dining hall and the way a school promotes healthy lifestyles – *Ofsted guidance amended.*
10. Measure success – set up and monitor five measures to test whether the School Food Plan is working – *DfE to collect this data.*
11. Share 'What Works Well' on a new website, to enable schools to learn from each other – *in progress.*
12. Improve the image of school food – *In progress, Innocent smoothies marketing exec recruited to assist.*
13. Bring school cooks closer to the rest of the catering sector – *In progress*
14. Improve the skills of the workforce – *Tender put together to assist in this*
15. Small school taskforce – caterers, kitchen designers and manufacturers to work together to provide good food for small school – *Panel formed, work in progress*
16. Ensure small schools are fairly funded – *Letter to be sent to Local Authorities when the panel conclude their recommendations*
17. The government should embark upon a phased roll out of free school meals for all primary school children, beginning with the local authorities with the highest percentage of children already eligible for free school meals – *Key Stage 1 from September 2014.*

What Does this Mean for North Lincolnshire Council?

The School Food plan is a welcome document and as it's main focus is getting school food back into the Headteacher's realm, NLC has much to gain. Our experience supports the report in that our most successful schools with the highest uptake are where the Headteacher is passionate about school food and recognises the benefits that a great healthy school lunch can give to their pupils in many ways other than nutrition.

Our day to day work with schools already covers much of the plan, including supporting food education with talks and practical sessions delivered to pupils by cooks and catering management team. We also support growing activity by offering equipment to schools as well as cooking the food grown. Our flexible pricing strategy also makes the catering service affordable to the smaller schools within the Authority. We also offer a breakfast service to many schools, although any funding to help this will be greatly appreciated and allow more breakfast clubs to be created.

The biggest impact of the plan will be the introduction of free school meals to all Key Stage 1 pupils. This will see an increase of approximately 1/3 school meals to be served each day. This will make the service much more efficient in many ways which will be welcomed by schools. The Government has made capital expenditure available to assist in providing the additional meals, totalling £356,621 for maintained and voluntary aided schools within NLC. The People's directorate is working alongside schools catering regarding this funding.

The Schools Catering team is already busy meeting Headteachers and preparing for this change across 48 of our 54 schools in the Primary Sector. This work involves:

- Forecasting staffing needs
- Equipment purchase – plates, bowls, cutlery,
- Heavy Equipment purchase – Cooking equipment
- Dining Rooms – Flow and ensuring all pupils get their lunch served within the available timeframe.

In addition, Schools Catering is already an approved provider for schools in Lincolnshire who are busy looking at capacity and have approached us to provide additional meals to their schools. This is an exciting proposal which meets with our Commercial agenda. In order to provide additional meals, additional capacity would be required. To help make this commercial opportunity a reality schools catering would need a separate Kitchen facility. The Civic Centre kitchen is at bursting point and adding extra meals on to individual schools kitchens is both difficult to arrange and not feasible for this additional work.

Clearly a location such as the Broughton Infants School once vacated would be ideal as it already has a spacious kitchen on site. It is appreciated that a business case would need to be developed for any facility including other plans for that facility to be taken into account. It is also worth noting that Lincolnshire has also been allocated capital funding to provide the additional meals therefore they may contribute to any equipment that is needed. If Broughton is not available then a different site would need to be identified. This would also allow

catering to provide additional items to Leisure as part of more joined up working and sharing capacity.

Conclusion

Schools Catering welcomes The School Food Plan and all that it will bring. It will also assist the council with its health and well-being aims and there may be more opportunities to expand that link. We anticipate that it will make The Schools Catering Service more efficient as well as more valued, as at long last great school food gets the recognition it deserves in linking to improved pupil attainment and achievement. We hope this plan will help to create a generation of children who enjoy food that makes them healthier, more successful and, most importantly, happier.

Supporting Information

<http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/plan/>

<http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/film/>

Sharon Seddon
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27 January 2014